



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh Research Explorer

### The Tetragrammaton in the Habakkuk Peshier

**Citation for published version:**

Lim, T 2018, The Tetragrammaton in the Habakkuk Peshier. in M Satlow (ed.), *Strength to Strength: Essays in Honor of Shaye J. D. Cohen*. Judaic Studies, Brown University, pp. 157-168.

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Version created as part of publication process; publisher's layout; not normally made publicly available

**Published In:**

Strength to Strength

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



# The Tetragrammaton in the Habakkuk Pesher

TIMOTHY H. LIM

*Institution?*

A striking feature of the Habakkuk Pesher is its representation of the four letters of YHWH, or the Tetragrammaton, in paleo-Hebrew script while the rest of 1QpHab is written in square, Aramaic script. There is no doubt that this manner of presenting the scroll was intended by the scribe, and not the result of an error or secondary insertion.<sup>1</sup> The paleo-Hebrew script was used exclusively for the divine name YHWH; other divine names of El, Eloha, and Sebaot were written in the same square script as the rest of the scroll. Why did the scribes write the Tetragrammaton in the way that they did?<sup>2</sup>

It is commonly thought that the writing of YHWH in paleo-Hebrew script was intended to guard the divine name from improper use.<sup>3</sup> The specific nature of this guarding varies in scholarly explanations. Mathias Delcor attributed the Habakkuk Pesher's writing of the divine name in "caractères phéniciens" to the great respect that the Jews had for the ineffable name and the convention of making the four letters sacrosanct

---

It is a pleasure to dedicate this article to an esteemed colleague and good friend, Shaye J. D. Cohen.

1. Hartmut Stegemann believed that YHWH was written by a later hand and inserted into the copied scroll (ΚΥΠΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΣ and ΚΥΠΙΟΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ: *Aufkommen und Ausbreitung des religiösen Gebrauchs von ΚΥΠΙΟΣ und seine Verwendung im Neuen Testament* [Bonn Habilitationsschrift, 1969], 91 n. 502). However, the Tetragrammaton was written in the same ink as the rest of the scroll and without any false spacing that would indicate that the name was inserted after the rest of the scroll had been written.

2. Two hands have been identified: scribe A copied col. I–XII, 13 and scribe B XII, 13–XIII, 4.

3. See recently, e.g., George J. Brooke, "Physicality, Paratextuality and Pesher Habakkuk," in *On the Fringe of Commentary: Metatextuality in the Ancient Near Eastern and Ancient Mediterranean Cultures*, ed. Sydney H. Aufrère, Philip S. Alexander, and Zlatko Pleše in association with Cyril Jacques Bouloux, OLA 232 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 175–93, here 190: "The standard opinion is that the use of the paleo-Hebrew for the tetragrammaton is done to protect the name from abuse."

with these “curieuses graphies.”<sup>4</sup> Had the letters of the divine name been written in the Aramaic script, then Delcor believed that readers of the scroll may have been liable to read and pronounce the name of YHWH, a blasphemy punishable by death. He pointed to the contemporary evidence of LXX Lev 24:16 and its rendering of the Hebrew “one who will blaspheme” by the Greek “one who will pronounce.”

Jonathan Siegel, on the other hand, argued that it was the sectarian belief in “the permanence of the Divine Name” that was behind the Qumran practice of writing the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script.<sup>5</sup> Basing himself on the rabbinic discussion of the writing of the divine names, and the prefixes and suffixes attached to them, Siegel sought the explanation in the scribal practice of erasures and cancellations, arguing that the Qumran practice is to be explained by “the palaeographical reflection of a significant theological consideration.”<sup>6</sup> For him, the writing of the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script is a scribal convention used to guard the divine name from being erased.

## Different Ways of Profaning the Divine Name

There is one passage in the Habakkuk Peshar that appears to say something about the profanation of the divine name. In 1QpHab II, 4, the line reads: וַיַּחֲלִיל אֶת שְׁמֵן קֹדֶשׁוֹ “[and they defiled] his holy Na[me].” The clause is badly damaged by a tear down the middle of the column and a sizable hole that extends to line 6. On the online image of the Digital

4. Mathias Delcor, “Des diverses manières d’écrire le tétragramme sacré dans les anciens documents hébraïques,” *RHR* 147 (1955): 145–73, here 147.

5. Jonathan Siegel, “The Employment of Paleo-Hebrew Characters for the Divine Names at Qumran in the Light of Tannaitic Sources,” *HUCA* 42 (1971): 159–72. Siegel saw particularly significance in (1) the representation of the two Tetragrammata in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> XVI, 7 and XXI, 2 that could not be erased but were canceled from reading by the addition of dots above and below them; and (2) examples of the writing of the prefixes and suffixes along with YHWH in paleo-Hebrew script in 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>. He cited Patrick Skehan’s preliminary summary (“The Text of Isaias at Qumran” *CBQ* 15 [1955]: 40–43, here 42–43). An example can be found in 4Q53, frag. 12, col. II, line 30 (Isa 26:4) in E. Ulrich et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.X: The Prophets*, DJD XV (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 45–74, here 59. For Siegel, the scribe of this scroll indicated that neither the divine name nor the prefixes and suffixes could be erased.

6. Siegel, “Employment of Paleo-Hebrew Characters,” 171. A third explanation that the paleo-Hebrew script was used to mark out 1QpHab as nonbiblical can be set aside, since biblical scrolls are also written in paleo-Hebrew script (e.g., 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> [4Q57]). For a summary of biblical texts written in paleo-Hebrew script, see K. Matthews, “The Background of Paleo-Hebrew Texts at Qumran,” in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O’Connor, ASOR Special Volume Series 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 554–68.

Dead Sea Scrolls, the two fragments should be moved farther apart.<sup>7</sup> Preserved is a particle (אֵת), followed by specks of varying sizes consistent with the letters *shin* and *qoph*. The above restoration is widely followed.<sup>8</sup> Elisha Qimron suggested a slightly longer beginning, [וּכְיָא חֲלָלוּ], which can be translated as “[and because they defiled].”<sup>9</sup> Bilha Nitzan justifies the restoration by a reference to CD XV, 3 and its biblical source text Lev 22:32.<sup>10</sup> Delcor, moreover, sees the abuse in CD XV as not only the pronunciation of the divine name YHWH but also the abbreviation of it. He interprets the CD passage with m. Shevu’ot 4:13, where the prohibition concerns the pronunciation of the divine name in an abbreviated form of the Tetragrammaton.<sup>11</sup>

The Damascus Document’s statement about the profanation of the divine name occurs in a context very different from that of the Habakkuk Pesher. I translate CD XV, 1–3 as follows:

[He sh]all (add: אֵל, not) swear, neither by aleph and lamed, nor by aleph and dalet, the exception (to this rule) are the oaths of the ones entering (reading: שְׁבוּעַת הַבְּאִים)<sup>2</sup> by the curses of the covenant. And the torah of Moses he shall not call to mind, for in it are all the declarations of the Name.<sup>3</sup> And if he swears, then he transgresses, and defiles the Name (וְחָלַל אֶת הַשֵּׁם).

The final clause, “he defiles the Name,” is clearly the supposed source of the reconstruction of 1QpHab II, 4. Before we examine it, let us note some commonly accepted emendations of the opening lines of CD XV. The particle אֵל is added to the beginning of the line to negate the verb [יִשְׁ]בַע. This restoration is required by the sense, and also the syntax, a negation usually precedes בִּי אִם.<sup>12</sup> The scribe incorrectly wrote שְׁבוּעַת הַבְּאִים (“the oaths

7. See the images of the Digital Dead Sea Scrolls of the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum (<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/habakkuk>). The fragments are not placed so closely in *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, ed. Millar Burrows with the assistance of John C. Trever and William H. Brownlee (New Haven, CT: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950), plate LV.

8. William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, SBLMS 24 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 53; Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim. Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*, CBQMS 8 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979), part I, p. 4; Horgan, “Pesharim,” in *Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents*, vol. 6B of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, ed. James H. Charlesworth et al., PTS DSSP 6B (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 162 n. 28; and Bilha Nitzan, *מגילות מדבר יהודה* (1QpHab) (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1986), 152.

9. Elisha Qimron, *מגילות מדבר יהודה החיבורים העבריים כרך ראשון* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi, 2010), 246.

10. Nitzan, *מגילות מדבר יהודה*, 153 n. 4.

11. Delcor, “Des diverses manières,” 159.

12. Elisha Qimron, “שבועת הבאים in the Damascus Document 15:1-2,” *JQR* 81.1-2 (1990): 115.

of the sons”), and it is widely accepted that it should be corrected to שבועת הבאים (cf. הבא בברית, line 5), referring to the oaths of those entering the covenant. There are supralinear dots above כי בה כל פרוש השם, implying that the final clause of line 2 should be removed from reading or in subsequent copying, since it imputes to the torah of Moses all the declarations of the divine name.

The context of CD XV, 1–3 concerns the swearing of oaths. It is generally agreed that the letters *aleph* and *lamed* are abbreviations of the first two letters of the divine name Elohim, and that *aleph* and *daleth* the first two letters of Adonai. Chaim Rabin pointed out that the law refers to the prohibition of swearing by any of the names of God, with the sole exception of swearing by “the curses of the covenant.”<sup>13</sup>

CD XV, however, is not a general law referring to the prohibition against using all divine names; it refers to the use of the two divine names Elohim (or Eloha) and Adonai. Only two divine names can be represented by the initial letters *aleph-lamed* or *aleph-daleth*. The law specifies against oaths that use Elohim and Adonai. The subsequent exception clause (כי אם) is not exclusive (“only”) but iterative (“except for”). The sectarian is not to swear by oaths using Elohim or Adonai. But the oaths of those entering the covenant are exempted from this prohibition. The Damascus Document’s law is consistent with what Josephus says about the Essenes, who are obliged to take “tremendous oaths” (ἄρκτοι φριχώδεις) before they are allowed to touch the common food (*War* 2.139–142).

The use of CD XV, 1–3 to explain 1QpHab II, 4 is questionable, ostensibly focusing on the similarity of the formulation of the clause “and he defiles the Name” (וחלל את השם). The texts are similar but not the same: 1QpHab II, 4 has the longer form of “my holy Name.” To be sure, the substantive השם is a biblical circumlocution or synonym for Adonai and YHWH found in the biblical texts, CD XV, 1–3, and 1QpHab II, 4, but the divine name can be defiled in different ways. It is not necessarily about the use of the divine names in swearing oaths.

The biblical source text in CD XV has been traced by Nitzan to Lev 22:32. This supposed biblical source text, however, does not concern the swearing of oaths as such, but the general admonition of keeping and guarding the divine commandments. The call to holiness, exemplified by “I am YHWH,” requires Israelites to refrain from profaning “my holy Name” (ולא תחללו את שם קדשי), so that the Lord’s name will be sanctified (Lev 22:32).

13. Chaim Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 71–73, followed by Joseph M. Baumgarten and Daniel R. Schwartz, “Damascus Document (CD),” in *Damascus Document, War Scroll and Related Documents*, vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, ed. James H. Charlesworth et al., PTSDSSP 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 37 n. 126.

There is no reason to limit the reason for defiling the divine name to the swearing of oaths. The profanation of God's name is a concept found in many biblical texts, especially in the Priestly literature (e.g., Lev 18:21, 19:12, 21:6, 22:2, Jer 34:16). Different reasons are given for the defilement of the divine name: the holy name is profaned in the worship of Molech (Lev 20:3); in the greed, social injustice, and sexual misconduct of Israel (Amos 2:7); and in idolatrous worship (Ezek 20:39; cf. Ezek 36:20-23, 39:25, 43:7). The priests, the sons of Aaron, are holy to God and do not profane the name of God, because they carry out the offerings by fire. They remain so on the condition that they do not marry a prostitute, a defiled woman, or a divorcee (Lev 20:6-7).

Several points are borne out by examining the rationale for the reconstruction of 1QpHab II, 4 from CD XV, 3: (1) CD's use of the defilement formula in a context prohibiting the swearing of oaths is not dependent on Lev 22:32, which concerns the observance of the divine commandments generally. (2) In the biblical texts there are many ways by which an Israelite could defile the divine name. (3) The profanation formula in 1QpHab II, 4 and CD XV, 1-3 is similar but not the same. The Habakkuk Pesher, but not CD, qualifies "the Name" with "my holiness." And (4) the accepted restoration of 1QpHab II, 4 does not have to be explained by the rationale found in CD XV, 1-3.

## Swearing Oaths in the Rule of the Community

Before we examine what defiling or profaning the divine name means in 1QpHab II, 4, it is salutary to examine one other passage that has been interpreted to mean a prohibition against the pronunciation of the divine name. "[T]he paleo-Hebrew script," stated George Brooke, "would have reduced the chance that a reader would inadvertently pronounce the divine name."<sup>14</sup> Brooke did not say where he found evidence for this explanation. Others have understood a passage in the Rule of Community as a sectarian statement against the pronunciation of the divine name. 1QS VI, 27 reads as follows: [ ] *ואשר יזכיר דבר בשם הנכבד על כול ה* [ ].<sup>15</sup> This has been translated by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, and Edward Cook as "Anyone who speaks aloud the M[ost] Holy Name of God, [whether in ...]."<sup>16</sup> The bottom of column VI is partly mutilated, but the translators have understood it as an infraction relating to the pronunciation of the divine name.

14. Brooke, "Physicality," 191.

15. See the images of the Digital Dead Sea Scrolls, <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/community>.

16. Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 135.

The context is the multiyear initiation process of the volunteer who is joining the *yahad* (1QS VI, 24–27). The precepts by which he is to be judged, in an inquiry to determine his suitability, include this clause putatively prohibiting the pronunciation of the divine name.

But what does the clause mean? Literally, it means “and whoever will cause a matter/word to be remembered in the Name, which (ה) is honoured over/according to all *h*[ ].” The end of the line is not preserved, and Qimron has restored it to *הכ[תוב בתורה]*, “which is written in the torah.”<sup>17</sup> But the source of this biblical passage is not found in the Torah. The source text is traced to Deutero-Isaiah, where the context concerns the swearing of oaths. In Isa 48:1, the prophet calls his hearers to account, invoking the triple designation of “the house of Jacob,” “Israel,” and “the loins of Judah” and charging them for falsely “swearing by the name of YHWH” and “invoking the God of Israel.” Preben Wernberg-Møller points out that *זכיר* in 1QS VI, 27 is to be understood by its sense in Isa 48:1, where the verb is used in parallel with *נשבעים*.<sup>18</sup> He translates the line as “[The one w]ho makes an oath in the honoured name.”<sup>19</sup> 1QS VI, 27 is a prohibition against swearing oaths by invoking the divine and honoured name and is consistent with the law expressed in CD XV, 1–3. It is not a prohibition against pronouncing the holy name of God as such.

### Treachery and Unfaithfulness in the Renewed Covenant

When we turn to the Habakkuk Peshar, it is evident that 1QpHab II, 4 has nothing to do with the swearing of oaths or pronouncing of the Tetragrammaton. The first four lines of 1QpHab, column II, read as follows:

<sup>1</sup> foretold (Hab 1:5d). *vacat* [The interpretation of the passage concerns] the traitors with the man <sup>2</sup> of the lie, because [they did] n[ot] believe in the words of] the Teacher of Righteousness, (which were) from the mouth of <sup>3</sup> God. And concerns the trai[tors to the] new [covenant], bec[au]se <sup>4</sup> they did not remain faithful in the covenant of God, [and defiled] His [ho]ly Na[me].<sup>20</sup>

17. Qimron, *מגילות מדבר יהודה*, 220.

18. Preben Wernberg Møller, *The Manual of Discipline. Translated and Annotated with an Introduction*, STDJ 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 29, 112 n. 86.

19. *Ibid.*, 29.

20. Translation from my commentary on Habakkuk Peshar (in preparation) to be published in the Oxford Commentary on the Dead Sea Scrolls series (<http://www.ocdss.div.ed.ac.uk>).



The reconstructed clause, “[and defiled] His [ho]ly Na[me]” occurs in line 4 and at the end of the second of three pesherite comments on Hab 1:5b. In the MT, this biblical verse refers to YHWH’s command for the righteous to look at the amazing work that he is doing in their days: “Look at the nations and see! Be amazed! Be astounded! For I am doing a work in your days, and you will not believe when told” (NRSV).

The pesherist, however, read Hab 1:5b differently. He understood יסופר not as “told” but “foretold.” This predictive interpretation of the verb is in keeping with the pesherist’s hermeneutics of reading into the prophetic oracles of old a prediction of events that were taking place in his time, the middle of the first century BCE, concerning the traitors, the Liar, and the Teacher of Righteousness. He read a variant in בגדים (“traitors”; LXX: *οἱ καταφρονῆται*) instead of the graphically similar בגוים (“the nations”) of the MT. In the MT, the preposition *bet* is required by the verb “to see,” but in the pesherite variant it serves as the first radical of *bgd*, “to act or deal treacherously.”

For the pesherist, the biblical verse refers to those whom he calls “trai[tors to the] new [covenant],” and their treachery is explained as some form of abandonment of the faith in the covenant. William Brownlee is partly correct to say that “[o]ne is not to think of profanity in the use of God’s name.”<sup>21</sup> He interprets this passage as a reference to the defection of those who joined the sect and subsequently fell away (cf. CD XX, 10–15).

But the clause “they defiled his holy name,” does concern profanity, except that the nature of the profanity is not in the taking the divine name in vain in oaths or pronouncing the ineffable Tetragrammaton. Given that the pesherist labels the perpetrators as “traitors of the new covenant” and describes them as being unfaithful to the covenant, it can be inferred that the profanity concerns the breaking of the “new” or better “renewed” covenant, as understood by the sect.

What the pesherist says about the nature of the defilement of the divine name in 1QpHab II, 4 is evocative of the themes of Ezek 36:16–38, where YHWH’s wrath was poured out on Israel, who committed bloodshed and idolatry that defiled the land. In verse 20, YHWH commands the prophet to declare that he (YHWH) is about to act because the house of Israel “have profaned my holy Name” (וַיְחַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם קֹדְשִׁי). Moreover, the house of Israel committed these morally impure deeds “among the nations” (בְּגוֹיִם; v. 22). The defilement formula is identical to 1QpHab II, 4, with the minor adaptation of the first- to third-person suffix on “holiness.”

21. Brownlee, *Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, 55.



## Divine Names in the Habakkuk Pesher

No explanation is given in the Habakkuk Pesher for writing the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script. An examination of passages in the Damascus Document and Rule of the Community yielded a different explanation for the defilement of the holy name, relating to the swearing of oaths. In this situation, we should turn to the evidence of the Habakkuk Pesher scroll itself to see how the divine names are used and presented.

We need to establish what evidence there is in the Habakkuk Pesher rather than impose explanations derived externally from other Dead Sea Scrolls, the LXX, rabbinic texts, and early Jewish literature in general, since scribes of antiquity followed different practices.<sup>22</sup> Even within the one genre of the continuous pesher, the scribal practice of representing the divine name varies.<sup>23</sup> Only one copy of the Habakkuk Pesher (1QpHab) is extant, copied by two hands, the first scribe penned the words of column I, 1 to column XII, 13, and the second, column XII, 13–XIII, 4.<sup>24</sup> Because of the mutilation of line 17 of column XII, where the pesher cites Hab 2:20 and references YHWH, it is unclear whether there was any difference in practice between scribes A and B.

Four divine names are attested in the Habakkuk Pesher scroll: Eloha (אלוה), Sebaot (צבאות), El (אל), and YHWH (יהוה). Adonai (אדוני) and Elohim (אלהים) are not used, but the latter would presumably have been attested in Hab 1:12 had the biblical verse been preserved at the end of column IV (MT: אלוהי). Elohim also occurs in MT Hab 3:18, but chapter 3 of the prophecy is absent in 1QpHab. The related divine name, Eloha, a back-form of the plural, is used in the citation of Hab 1:11b (1QpHab IV, 10, 13). In the prophecy of Habakkuk, it refers to the Chaldeans placing their strength as “their god” (לאלוהי). Sebaot is used once as a divine epithet, juxtaposed to the Tetragrammaton (יהוה צבאות), in a citation of Hab 2:13 in 1QpHab X, 7. The scribe wrote YHWH in paleo-Hebrew script and Sebaot in square script.

The two divine names, El and YHWH, are used distinctly in the pesher. The Tetragrammaton (יהוה) is always written in paleo-Hebrew script and occurs exclusively in biblical quotations of the prophecy of Habakkuk. This divine name appears four times in the scroll in VI, 14; X, 7, 14; and XI,

22. Emanuel Tov judiciously summed up the matter: “It is unclear why certain scribes used paleo-Hebrew characters for the Tetragrammaton, while others wrote the Tetragrammaton in square characters” (*Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, STDJ 54 [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 240).

23. E.g., 4QpPs<sup>b</sup> (4Q173), frag. 5, line 4, writes לאל, including the preposition, in paleo-Hebrew script (MT: ליהוה).

24. Some of the corrections and changes may be attributed to scribe A or B, but in most cases there is insufficient writing available for comparison.

10. It may also have been used in other places where the biblical lemmata are not preserved and the corresponding MT has YHWH (I, 1; IV, 17 [2x]; and XII, 17).

By contrast, El (אל) is the divine name that the pesherist consistently used in his sectarian comments (I, 6, 11; II, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, [15]; V, 2, 3, 4; VII, 1, 4, 8, 13; VIII, 2, 10, 11, [17]; IX, 10; X, 3, 13; XI, 3, [15]; XII, 5, 9; XIII, 3). He does not use the Tetragrammaton in his comment of I, 11, “they rejected the law of God” (מאשו בתורה אל). The *sin* (ש) of מאש is either a variant spelling of מאס or a scribal error (cf. V, 11–12: מאס את התורה). This clause is dependent on Isa 5:24 and in the MT and 4QpIsa<sup>b</sup> (4Q162) II, 7 יהוה (in square script) is the divine name used. It is difficult to escape the impression that the use of El for YHWH in this clause is part of an intentional avoidance strategy.

There is a discernible pattern of scribal practice. In 1QpHab II, 4, the pesherist uses El in the biblical expression “the covenant of God” (ברית אל), whereas the MT and Qumran biblical texts consistently use the Tetragrammaton (ברית יהוה; e.g., Num 10:33; Deut 10:8). The pesherist’s use of El rather than YHWH in the construct is consistent with the practice of other sectarian scrolls (e.g., CD III, 11; V, 12; VII, 5; XIII, 14; XIV, 2; XX, 17; 1QS [II, 26]; V, 8; X, 10; 4Q267 frag. 9, col. 5, line 4 [in paleo-Hebrew script; cf. frag. 3, line 7]; 4Q280 frag. 2, line 6; 4Q491 frag. 11, col. 2, line 18; 6Q15 frag. 5, line 5). It has been suggested that there is a tendency to use generic divine names for the Tetragrammaton in the sectarian scrolls.<sup>25</sup>

## Substitutes for the Divine Name

The Habakkuk Pesher attests to other references to God beyond the divine names. The substantive צור (“rock”) refers to God in the citation of Hab I, 12b–13b, and the pesherist replicates this usage in the quotation of the biblical passage (1QpHab V, 1–2). It is not a divine name as such but a stock, biblical and figurative use of a geological term to express the qualities of support and defense thought to be found among God’s attributes.

Another substitute is the use of “truth” for the Tetragrammaton. When the pesherist states that the Wicked Priest “was reckoned to the name of truth” (1QpHab VIII, 9), he is using not biblical language but sectarian terminology.<sup>26</sup> The phrase שם האמת (“the name of truth”) is not used in the biblical texts. In the different versions of the Rule of the Community, “truth” is used as a substitute for “YHWH.” The citation of Isa 40:3 in one

25. So Martin Rösel, *Adonaj—warum Gott “Herr” genannt wird*, FAT 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 209.

26. The formulation נקרא על שם האמת should be translated as “reckoned to” rather than “called by” the name of truth (cf. Gen 48:6).

recension of the Rule of the Community (4Q259) reads “the way of truth” (דרך האמת; col. 3, line 4) for “the way of YHWH” (דרך יהוה; 1QS VIII, 3).

### **The Habakkuk Pesher, 1QpHab, and the Divine Names**

It is generally agreed that 1QpHab is a copy of the Habakkuk Pesher, evidenced by the errors in the scroll that could only be interpreted as scribal mistakes of copying. The writing of YHWH in paleo-Hebrew script is a scribal feature of 1QpHab; it is not necessarily a feature of the supposed original composition of the Habakkuk Pesher. The pesherist may or may not have written the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script.

Presumably what he did do was to use YHWH only when he was quoting the biblical texts.<sup>27</sup> He did not limit this practice to the Tetragrammaton, but he also wrote Eloha and Sebaot when he quoted the prophecy of Habakkuk. In his comments, he used El, and other circumlocutions and substitutes. There is an unmistakable tendency to use certain divine names in the biblical quotations, and other ones in his comments.

### **Scribal Attitudes to the Writing of the Divine Names**

The scribes who copied 1QpHab committed errors in relation to the writing of the divine name El. In line 1 of column VII, scribe A confused the preposition and divine name, writing אל only once in the clause “and God spoke to Habakkuk.” A correction written by the same, or a different, hand added another אל above the line and between the words אל and תבוק. It is likely that the scribal correction was adding the preposition rather than the divine name, since the pesherist followed the verb–subject sentence construction (cf. col. VII, 8, דברו הנבאים), and had he been inserting “God” one would have expected him to place the supralinear correction between the אל and וידבר. This scribal error was not in the writing of the divine name as such, but the morphologically identical אל of the preposition and divine name was the cause of the scribal error of haplography.

In column I, line 10, the final letter of תורה, in the clause “therefore the law will grow numb,” was incorrectly written as a *tav* before being reformed to a *heh*. The scribal error of writing the *tav* was influenced by

27. It is, of course, theoretically possible that the scribe systematically changed the pattern of use of divine names in his *Vorlage*, but this seems unlikely, if the other scribal interventions are anything to go by. Discernible scribal changes in 1QpHab are ad hoc or concern orthographical and morphological variants.

the phrase **אל בתורת** in the clause “who rejected the torah of God” written directly below it in line 11, and the mistake was corrected to *heh* once it was realized that the word **תורה** was not part of a construct.

In column II, line 2, the first word of the phrase **אל מפיא** (“from the mouth of God”) is written with a final *aleph* that augments the word. The spelling could be explained as the use of a digraph (**יא-**), but five lines later the same word is spelled without the final *aleph* in the phrase **מפי הכהן** (“from the mouth of the priest,” lines 7–8). The final *aleph* of **מפיא** is probably a dittography that wrongly anticipates the *aleph* of the following word **אל**.

By contrast, there is no scribal mistake associated with the writing of the divine names of Eloha, Sebaot, and Yhwh. The writing of the Tetragrammaton is further distinguished from the former two divine names by the fineness of its strokes and the use of the paleo-Hebrew script. For the scribes who copied 1QpHab, YHWH clearly had a significance that the other two divine names, Eloha and Sebaot, did not.

## Conclusions

The common scholarly view that the writing of the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script in the Habakkuk Pesher was used to protect the divine name from abuse has been examined in the foregoing discussion. I eschewed explanations that were drawn from external sources, and I sought a largely descriptive discussion of the use of the divine names, including the writing of the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script. I conclude that no single reason can explain all the features of the writing of the divine names.

The first half of the paper interrogated the claims that the convention can be explained by the concern for the inadvertent pronunciation of YHWH. The reconstruction of 1QpHab II, 4 led me to suggest that the defilement or profanation of the divine name is not the consequence of swearing oaths with the divine name but rather of the breaking of the renewed covenant.

In the second half of the paper I scrutinized internal evidence for clues to explain the presentation of the divine names. Central to the approach adopted above is the distinction that I draw between the composition of the Habakkuk Pesher and the scribal copying of 1QpHab. I demonstrated that the pesherist used certain divine names (Eloha, Sebaot, and Yhwh) when he quoted from the prophecy of Habakkuk, but he opted for *El* and other circumlocutions in his comments. He may or may not have written YHWH in paleo-Hebrew script. If he did so, then the special orthography had no bearing on his understanding of the prophet’s words. The writing

of YHWH in paleo-Hebrew script would have simply reflected a particular convention that he was following.

The scribes who copied 1QpHab did write the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script. But they did not do so for the other two divine names, Eloha and Sebaot, despite the fact that they were also found in the biblical quotations. They treated the writing of YHWH differently from the other two divine names by writing the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script and Eloha and Sebaot in square script. The fact that they reserved the paleo-Hebrew script only for the name YHWH suggests that they held it in a special regard. The nature of that regard has sometimes been explained in terms of a greater degree of sanctity, but there is no evidence in the commentary to substantiate or otherwise deny that supposition. The explanation, however, remains plausible.

They did not write El and other substitutes for the divine name in a special script. Moreover, the scribes who copied 1QpHab made errors associated with the reading of the divine name El. They did not commit similar errors when copying Eloha, Sebaot, and YHWH. It is possible that they took greater care in the writing of all three divine names of Eloha, Sebaot, and Yhwh, in a way that they did not with El.

The pesherist who wrote the sectarian commentary known as the “Habakkuk Pesher” and the scribes who copied 1QpHab considered the Tetragrammaton a special case among the divine names used in the prophecy of Habakkuk and in the sectarian comments associated with it. In varying ways, they showed by their use and scribal practice that YHWH is more important than the other divine names Eloha, Sebaot, and El.